

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

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INFO AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L S A N T C A G O 6 7 1 8

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CI, AR, MILI

SUBJ: UNITAS EXERCISE

REFS: (A) STATE 223625, (B) BUENOS AIRES 6930

1. EMBASSY SUPPORTS RETURN TO ORIGINAL UNITAS ROUTE THROUGH MAGELLAN STRAIT AS SUGGESTED PARAGRAPH 1 REFTTEL A. AS THE DEPARTMENT IS AWARE, WE HAVE ALWAYS LOOKED WITH SOME MISGIVING ON THE BEAGLE CHANNEL REVISION. THE SITUATION THERE AND CHILE/ARGENTINE RELATIONS MORE GENERALLY HAVE, IF ANYTHING, BECOME MORE TENSE IN THE INTERIM. WE SEE NO VALUE AND SOME POSSIBLE RISKS TO CONTINUING WITH THAT ROUTE NOW THAT ARGENTINA HAS WITHDRAWN FROM ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN UNITAS. EVEN IN THE LIKELY CIRCUMSTANCE THAT THERE ARE NO COMPLICATIONS, THE CHILEAN PRESS WILL FOCUS ON THE VISIT OF US NAVY UNITS TO THE AREA, AND THE GOC MAY ATTEMPT TO EXPLOIT THE SITUATION TO ITS BENEFIT.

2. THE RATIONALE SUGGESTED IN PARAGRAPH 2 OF REFTTEL A FOR RETURNING TO THE ORIGINAL ROUTE STRIKES US AS FULLY ADEQUATE. WE ARE AWARE THAT THE CHILEANS WOULD ACCEPT SUCH A CHANGE.

LANDAU

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